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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. J., et al.,

Case No. 18-cv-00428-DMS-MDD

Petitioners-Plaintiffs,

Date Filed: April 15, 2019

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”); et al.,

**PLAINTIFFS' RESPONSE TO
DEFENDANTS' PROPOSED
PLAN REGARDING
IDENTIFICATION OF
EXPANDED *MS. L.* CLASS**

1 INTRODUCTION

2 The government has proposed a plan that will take at least one year — and
3 possibly up to two full years — to identify separated parents whose children were
4 released prior to June 26, 2018. Dkt. 394-1 at 2. That incredible request shows a
5 callous disregard for these families and should be rejected. These children were
6 separated at least 10 months ago, before June 26, 2018. For some of these children,
7 that may be nearly a lifetime.

8 Specifically, the government proposes a plan that would (1) allow an initial
9 three months just to build a statistical model to prioritize the order in which the
10 government will review files, and then (2) give the government another 21 months
11 to review the files. Everything about the plan is flawed.

12 First, a list of separated children already very likely exists for children who
13 were separated from their parents and released from ORR custody between April
14 and June 26, 2018. This is because the government began assigning Family Unit
15 numbers in April of 2018, enabling CBP to track families that were separated. By
16 cross-referencing CBP's list of separated children with ORR's list of children
17 released from ORR custody, the government could immediately identify the
18 separated children it released to sponsors between April and June 2018, assuming
19 that list does not already exist. That would immediately reduce the number of cases
20 the government has to review. It is a serious breach if that list does in fact exist (or
21 could have been immediately generated) and has not been mentioned by the
22 government.

23 Second, even if the government must review all the cases for the full period
24 at issue here (July 2017 – June 26, 2018), the government should be able to perform
25 this task in three months or less based on its past practice during the initial
26 reunification period last summer. Yet the government wants three months just to
27 create a statistical model before even beginning to review any files. If the
28 government wants to prioritize how it reviews files, that of course is fine. But its

1 time estimates are wholly insufficient given that the entire review of every file can
2 be done within 3 months.

3 Moreover, and critically, the government's plan will not only take far too
4 long, but it also will not be effective. That is because the government is not
5 proposing to review the paper files kept by case managers at the individual ORR
6 facilities where the children were held. Rather, the government is proposing to look
7 only at a computer portal maintained by ORR. Dkt. 394-2 at ¶ 9. But those portals
8 contain only a portion of the case managers' paper files and frequently will contain
9 no information about whether or not the child was separated.

10 The government should therefore issue an immediate directive to case
11 managers at ORR facilities around the country to review their paper files for
12 separations, like the government did in the days immediately following the issuance
13 of the preliminary injunction. The files are generally very thin and Plaintiffs'
14 experts conservatively estimate, based on their own review of files, that each should
15 take on average no more than 30 minutes. Moreover, the case managers will be
16 familiar with where they recorded information about separated parents in their own
17 files, so can likely do their review in less than 30 minutes. Notably, this is similar
18 to what the government did when the court ordered the government to reunite the
19 initial group of children (the approximately 2,500 in ORR custody on June 26);
20 ORR's case managers conducted a file review for more than 11,000 children within
21 a week.

22 Third, the government is proceeding as if HHS is solely responsible for
23 undertaking the task of identifying families. But ICE and CBP also have records of
24 separations, and DHS was of course the agency that separated the children. In
25 particular, the I-213 Form that DHS agents fill out to document apprehensions may
26 often contain a notation that the child was separated. Consequently, if the ORR
27 files do not indicate whether the child was separated, the government should be
28 required to immediately check the I-213 Form – along with any other information

1 in DHS's possession. This information includes an "Event ID number," which is
 2 issued to every person arrested by CBP and shows who they were arrested with.
 3 Because children arrested with their parents will share the same Event ID number,
 4 the government can find additional separations by looking for children who were
 5 arrested with an adult who shares a last name. These numbers thus provide a
 6 critical backstop if the case manager file and I-213 Form are not conclusive.

7 In sum, the government's unnecessarily long timeframe will only compound
 8 the harm the government has already inflicted on separated families. Ultimately,
 9 the government is simply refusing to prioritize the welfare of these children and
 10 families. The government initially argued that it should not even have to identify
 11 these families. Now it has submitted a plan that shows little regard for them and
 12 certainly not the urgency warranted where the lives of young children are at stake.
 13 The process of identifying the victims of the government's separation policy is the
 14 first step to ensuring that no child is permanently orphaned.

15 DISCUSSION

16 A. The Government Must Produce Any Existing Lists of Separated 17 Families Who Are Members of the Expanded Class.

18 Plaintiffs believe that government agencies outside of HHS likely have
 19 already compiled lists of all, or nearly all, separations from April 2018 to June 26,
 20 2018. That is because, according to a GAO report, the government in April
 21 instituted a more formal family identification system that allowed them to generate
 22 lists of parents and children who were separated. *See* GAO Report,
 23 Unaccompanied Children: Agency Efforts to Reunify Children Separated from
 24 Parents at the Border (October 2018) [hereinafter "GAO Report"] at 17, available at
 25 <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/694918.pdf> ("According to Border Patrol officials,
 26 Border Patrol modified its system on April 19, 2018, to include yes/no check boxes
 27 to allow agents to indicate that a child was separated from their parent(s)."). *See*
 28 *also* Brané Dec. ¶3. When this court ordered the government to reunify the original
 class of children, the government created a list that it provided to Plaintiffs of

1 separated children still in ORR custody on June 26. But it is likely that a list was
 2 also generated for all family units separated since the government started assigning
 3 identification numbers to separated families in April 2018. That list would include
 4 children who were released from ORR between April and June.

5 Accordingly, the Court should order all three relevant agencies – ORR, CBP
 6 and ICE – to provide an account of any lists of separated children, or provide
 7 declarations from high-level agency officials testifying that such lists do not exist
 8 for *any* subset of the expanded class definition. And if such lists do exist (or could
 9 have been generated in a matter of hours or days), the declarations should also
 10 explain why they were not mentioned in the government’s proposal.

11 Even a limited list of families separated between April and June 26 would go
 12 a long way towards identifying at least a portion of the expanded class.

13 **B. The Government Should Start Reviewing Paper Case Files Immediately
 14 Instead of Waiting Three Months to Perform a Statistical Analysis.**

15 1. Even taken on its own terms, the government’s extended timeline is
 16 unreasonable. The government initially proposes that manual review begin only
 17 after a three-month statistical analysis. But this delay is too long, and in any case
 18 unnecessary. The government says that after three months of development it would
 19 “try to apply [its data model] it to the available data for. . . approximately 47,000
 20 children,” and that “[i]t is *possible* that it *could* [] reduce the overall time required
 21 for manual review.” Graubard Dec. (Dkt. 394-3) ¶¶ 13, 15 (emphasis added). But
 22 the government does not deny that it needs to review all children’s files regardless
 23 of the results of the statistical analysis. Nor can it, because even a low error rate in
 24 the government’s statistical model could lead to hundreds, if not thousands, of
 25 missed separations.

26 In other words, the government appears to acknowledge that *all* children’s
 27 files must be reviewed anyway because their proposed data models will necessarily
 28 be imperfect. Waiting three months to prepare a data model is therefore needless.
 That is especially so since all the files can be reviewed manually within three

1 months, as described further below. If the government is going to try to prioritize
 2 how it manually reviews cases, then it must do so quickly and in a way that does
 3 not lengthen the three-month period for completing review of all the files.¹

4 2. As importantly, the government's plan for reviewing cases by looking solely
 5 at ORR's UAC portal will not come close to identifying all the separated families.²
 6 The portal contains only the subset of information that case managers chose to
 7 upload from their paper files. Between July of 2017 and April 2018, there was no
 8 field on the portal to record separations. Any information in the portal about
 9 separations would have therefore been included only if the case manager happened
 10 to upload it, which did not happen on a regular basis.

11 The paper case files developed by ORR case managers are therefore far more
 12 likely to include notations of separation, but not all of these documents are
 13

14 ¹ Moreover, to prioritize, the government need not spend the time creating a
 15 statistical model that it acknowledges will be imperfect. The government can
 16 quickly prioritize by simply looking at the age of the child. For instance, most
 17 children under 10 do not come by themselves, making it more likely that they were
 18 separated from a parent or legal guardian. Additionally, the government could
 19 prioritize records of children transferred to ORR from the El Paso area, where the
 20 government implemented a family-separation pilot project before the zero tolerance
 21 policy began, and where the bulk of the known early separations occurred
 22 beginning in the Fall of 2017.

23 ² Although Plaintiffs do not believe the portal should be used, the
 24 government's estimates for the time it will take to review portal files is
 25 unreasonable. The government states that each child's UAC portal contains about
 26 10-20 documents, and that it would take at least 5 to 15 minutes to download each
 27 document. Sualog Dec. (Dkt. 351-1) ¶ 18. The government apparently envisions
 28 that each analyst who is reviewing the files will first download the files and then
 review them. Based on this estimate, the government estimates that each analyst
 will review only one or two files per work day. At this pace, 100 analysts would
 need one to two years to review 46,000 files, at a pace of a maximum of two files a
 day. Sualog Dec. ¶ 18; 4/5/19 White Dec. (Dkt. 394-2) ¶ 21. But there is
 absolutely no reason for the process to move at such a glacial pace, even if portals
 were going to be used. For example, the government can allocate resources up
 front to have employees download and copy documents for analysts to then review.

1 accessible through the ORR portal system, and in fact they frequently will not be.
2 Consequently, it is thus imperative that the government perform a manual review of
3 ORR paper files compiled by case managers at the various facilities around the
4 country.

5 This review of the paper files in the various ORR facilities can be done
6 within three months, and certainly need not take one to two years. Plaintiffs'
7 experts have reviewed ORR files (produced by the government in response to
8 records requests). Turner Dec. ¶ 3. A conservative estimate is that it takes 30
9 minutes, at most, to review an ORR file to identify indicia of separation; in many
10 cases, it takes as little as ten minutes. *Id.* ¶ 5. But even assuming it will take a full
11 30 minutes per file, 100 case managers could review all 47,000 files within 29 work
12 days, or six work weeks. And case managers at the ORR facilities, given their
13 greater familiarity with their own notations, organizational methods, and the
14 children formerly in their care, will likely be able to perform this task even faster.

15 Significantly, when the government put together the original list of separated
16 families last summer, it used the case managers at ORR's facilities to conduct a
17 similar review. As Commander White stated in a previous declaration about
18 compiling the original class list last summer:

19 To ensure that every separated child in ORR custody who belongs to a
20 class member is identified and reunified, HHS has had each grantee at
21 one of ORR's approximately 110 shelters certify the separated children
22 who the grantee reasonably believes are in its care. HHS has also
23 conducted a full manual review of the case management file for each
24 one of the approximate 11,800 children in ORR custody—the
25 substantial majority of whom were not separated from a putative parent
26 at the border—to confirm or rule out any indicia of separation. The
27 manual review was conducted by dozens of HHS personnel working
28 nights and over the weekend. The results of both the manual review
and the grantee certifications are undergoing validation.

Dkt. 86-1 (July 5, 2018 White Dec.) ¶ 18. Commander White gave this
testimony on July 5, 2018, a mere ten days after the preliminary injunction

1 issued. So apparently ORR performed this review of nearly 12,000 files
 2 within approximately ten days.

3 **C. The Government Should Also Review ICE/CBP Files.**

4 In addition to reviewing ORR case manager files, the government should
 5 simultaneously review CBP and ICE files, or at an absolute minimum, review them
 6 whenever the ORR file is not determinative.

7 For instance, DHS files will contain Form I-213, “Record of
 8 Deportable/Inadmissible Alien,” which is completed upon apprehension and may
 9 often include a notation from the agent about separation. Unlike many other DHS
 10 forms, it contains a narrative section where the officer and agents processing
 11 parents and children can record information that is not otherwise captured in data-
 12 entry fields. Although the I-213 may occasionally be sent to ORR and end up in
 13 the case manager’s file, that will not always be true. *See* GAO Report at 19, n. 49
 14 (“CBP officials reported that prior to May 5, 2018, the Form I-213 was provided to
 15 ORR on a case-by-case basis and CBP did not require agents to include this form in
 16 its transfer packet.”). A review of the Form I-213—which can be electronically
 17 pulled up from DHS’s computer systems based on the alien identification number
 18 attached to each child who was transferred to ORR—is thus a critical backstop.

19 The government also should use the Event ID number assigned by DHS for
 20 each incident because, prior to April 2018, CBP did not always note a separation on
 21 the I-213. But when CBP arrests a group, every individual arrested during that
 22 incident receives the same Event ID number. Brané Dec. ¶4. Consequently, by
 23 using the child’s Event ID number, the government can determine if any adult was
 24 arrested at the same time with a same name, thus indicating they are a potential
 25 class member.³

26 ³ The government has previously used similar methods. Immediately after the
 27 June 26, 2018 injunction, a “data team (with the support of ORR, other HHS
 28 operating and staff divisions, and DHS sub-agencies) mined more than 60 DHS and
 HHS databases to identify indicators of possible separation, such as an adult and

In sum, review of the ORR case manager paper files will hopefully be sufficient, but DHS should not be allowed to skirt responsibility for remedying the problem it created by unconstitutionally separating families and then not keeping accurate, accessible records. DHS records must be utilized in conjunction with the ORR file review.

CONCLUSION

The Court should order the government to complete the identification process within three months and provide the information on a rolling basis. And if a list exists for separated children who were released from ORR custody between April and June 2018 (or can be generated in hours or days), that list should be provided within 7 days.

Specifically: Plaintiffs respectfully ask the Court to order that the government:

- Instruct case managers immediately to begin reviewing the ORR files in their possession;
- Assign DHS to review I-213s and Event ID numbers in the event that review of ORR files is inconclusive;
- Immediately produce any lists of children who were separated and released between April and June 2018, and if such lists exist, to explain in a declaration why they were not previously mentioned; and
- Complete the identification process within three months and provide the information on a rolling basis.

child with the same last name apprehended on the same day at the same location.” GAO Report at 7.

1 Dated: April 15, 2019

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Respectfully Submitted,

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17 **Admitted Pro Hac Vice*

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on April 15, 2019, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk for the United States District Court for the Southern District of California by using the appellate CM/ECF system. A true and correct copy of this brief has been served via the Court's CM/ECF system on all counsel of record.

/s/ Lee Gelernt

Lee Gelernt, Esq.

Dated: April 15, 2019

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. L., et al.,

Petitioners-Plaintiffs,

V.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), et al.

Respondents-Defendants.

Case No. 18-cv-00428-DMS-MDD

Date Filed: April 15, 2019

DECLARATION OF MICHELLE BRANE

Declaration of Michelle Brané

1. I, Michelle Brané, make the following declaration based on my personal knowledge and declare under the penalty of perjury pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that the following is true and correct.

2. I am an attorney and the Director of the Migrant Rights and Justice Program at the Women's Refugee Commission ("WRC"). I have previously submitted declarations in this case.

3. It is my understanding that beginning in April 2018, CBP began assigning Family Unit Identifier Numbers to families apprehended together at the southern border. It is my understanding that even though this number did not, and still does not transfer into ICE or ORR electronic files, that CBP is able to access these numbers in their system and that CBP could be directed to examine data backups or their system for a list of families apprehended at the border where the identifier number was recorded before it was erased.

28

1 4. CBP has for many years assigned “event I.D. numbers” to groups of individuals
2 apprehended or processed in the same group.

3 5. It is my understanding that these “event I.D. numbers” could be helpful in
4 sorting through cases to identify adults apprehended or processed at the same time as
5 children who were transferred to ORR, thus providing information about a potential
6 separation.

7
8 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that
9 the foregoing is true and correct, based on my personal knowledge. Executed on April
10 15, 2019

12 _____/s
13 Michelle Brané

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. L., et al.,

Petitioners-Plaintiffs,

V.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), et al.

Respondents-Defendants.

Case No. 18-cv-00428-DMS-MDD

Date Filed: April 15, 2019

DECLARATION OF CHRISTINA E. TURNER

Declaration of Christina E. Turner

1. I am currently employed as the Deputy Director for Special Programs at Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). I have been employed by KIND for over five years and have focused my work on the representation of unaccompanied minors in immigration legal proceedings during that time.

2. KIND is currently working with more than 300 individuals—adults and children—that were separated by U.S. government officials upon entry to the United States in 2017 and 2018. In my capacity as Deputy Director for Special Programs, I oversee a team of attorneys working on the cases of separated (and, in some cases, reunified) children and families.

3. In our work with unaccompanied and separated minors, attorneys at KIND frequently submit records requests to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to obtain the child's file from their time in custody (the "ORR file"). After submitting the request for the file, ORR typically sends an email containing a pdf file. The ORR file ranges in number of pages depending on the length of time the child was in ORR

1 custody and the child's particular needs. It is my understanding that the ORR file that
2 attorneys receive through this records request process contains all or substantially all
3 of the relevant information contained within ORR's complete case management files
4 for each child that has been in its custody.

5 4. In the past week, I have viewed 10 different ORR files of KIND clients, ranging
6 in length from 52 pages to 334 pages long. I selected files that had been categorized
7 in our database as separated family cases. These files included children that entered
8 the U.S. in both 2017 and 2018.

9 5. In reviewing these 10 files manually, page-by-page, it took me between 3 and
10 20 minutes per file to detect indicia of separation from a parent or guardian within the
11 file. For some files, an indicator of separation, such as a note that the parent entered
12 the U.S. with the child, was quickly apparent because it was contained within the
13 UAC Assessment portion of the file. Presumably, ORR employees or contractors
14 accessing the UAC portal directly would be able to jump quickly to this portion of the
15 child's file, and in some cases, would be able to see a note that the child entered the
16 U.S. with a parent or guardian.

17 6. In one file I reviewed, it took me approximately five minutes of reviewing the
18 file to spot a note that indicated the 12-year-old minor had traveled to the U.S. with
19 his mother in February of 2018. About 15 minutes into reviewing the remainder of
20 the 106-page file, I encountered a copy of a "Significant Incident Report" on page 105
21 of the file. The content of the report focused on the child's disclosure of having been
22 separated from his mother at the border.

23 7. In another file I reviewed of a 17-year-old minor who entered the U.S. in May
24 of 2018, I encountered another Significant Incident Report three minutes into viewing
25 the file (on page five of a 79-page file) indicating that the minor disclosed being
26 separated from his biological father while in DHS custody.

27
28

8. In order to conduct a review of non-separated files as well, I emailed four different ORR files to an attorney on my team who I supervise and instructed him to review each file to try to discern if any of the files involved children who had been separated from a parent or guardian upon entry. Two of the files were for minors who were separated at the border upon entry, and two files were for typical unaccompanied minors who did not enter with a parent. My supervisee did a manual, page-by-page review of each file and reported that it took him approximately five minutes to conclusively determine whether the child was separated. As an additional check, he then performed a search of each file using the optical character recognition tool in Adobe Acrobat Pro DC software. For each file, it took Adobe between five and 15 minutes to enhance the pdf document for optical character recognition. After the enhancement ran, my supervisee was able to run a search for keywords such as “parent,” “separate,” “mother” and “father” very quickly, and locate these terms, if they appeared in the document and were recognized by the program, within just a few minutes, leading to sections of the document containing information about the minor’s parents.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and understanding. Executed on April 15, 2019.

Christina E. Turner /s